

HR

WSD Personnel
Washington State
Employee
Assistance
Program

FrontLine

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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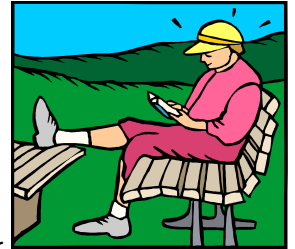
Your New Coworker... Will You Get Along?

The new hire has become your coworker. Will you get along? These suggestions will help things go well: 1) Realize first impressions count for you as much as for the new coworker, so act quickly to welcome this person into the fold. 2) Take the lead and dismiss the thought that others will judge your kindness as resulting from ulterior motives. 3) Don't "hover" over your new coworker, giving too much information and not enough space. Allow him or her to get used to the new environment. 4) Assure your new co-worker you are willing to answer any questions. Make sure you've scheduled time to do so. 5) Value differences. Consider how your differences will positively help the work unit. 6) Avoid asking personal questions, such as, "Why did you leave your last job?" or "Where do you live?"



Give A Short Break More Respect

Short work breaks need more respect. They can be powerful recovery periods for managing stress. Don't head for the staff kitchen or a coworker's cubicle on break! You'll shortchange the health benefits. Complete detachment is what you're shooting for. If possible, leave your cell phone, pager, and PDA behind. Try a quick walk, go to the lounge on another floor, or head around the corner and sit on a bench. The complete shift in focus is what maximizes these mini-rejuvenators.



Your Performance Exceeding Standard

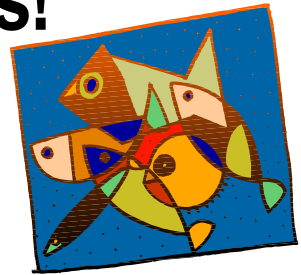
Everyone enjoys that coveted prize on their performance review—the supervisor comment that an employee's performance is "outstanding" or "exceeds standard." Do you have a solid understanding with your supervisor about how to achieve this? Or, are your fingers crossed each year just before your review? To receive an outstanding review, discussion prior to the review is usually required. Meet with your supervisor, and define specifics you can work toward all year.



Valuing Diversity Pays Dividends!

A work culture is not only policies, procedures, mission statements, and goals. It's you. It's the collective values and behaviors of you and the employees who work with you.

Your agency needs you to be a team player in valuing diversity. Agencies that value diversity and work cultures celebrating this value have fewer turnovers along with more satisfied and productive employees. The secret lies with understanding your biases. Biases are strong beliefs people hold about the way things **should** be. They influence how we see people who are different than us. Your biases are part of your past, not your future. When you decide to value diversity, celebrating it is not far behind.



Don't Burn Bridges if You Resign



Sure, it may have been pretty tough these past several years, but don't use that as a reason to burn bridges with your employer or to lose your professional cool when you resign. It may be a tempting idea to watch how it's done on television "in style," but in real life leaving in a huff doesn't work well. It will also leave you with a sour taste in your mouth when it's over. When you burn bridges, the one who ends up regretting it is you. You may know more people at work than anywhere else in your life. You risk losing these relationships when you burn bridges because these employees, whose paychecks are tied to the employer, are not likely to align themselves with your resentment. You could lose valuable connections that may help you down the road. The EAP will help you deal with the stress of separation. That includes anger that might be coming out now and perhaps the pain of letting go of relationships you've had for a long time.

Addiction: Focus on Responsibility Not Blame

If you are determined to play an influential role in motivating a person in your family or circle of friends to consider substance abuse treatment this year, what major shift in your thinking must you make in order to increase the likelihood of success? Those who have been successful at this task usually have one common denominator: they stopped blaming. They took the focus off the alcohol or drugs. They stopped talking about cutting back, trying to control consumption, guilt-tripping, and manipulation. They placed absolute responsibility on the patient for entering treatment. When friends and family make this decision, cover-up and enabling dramatically decrease. The effect of consequences of the person's substance abusing behavior dramatically increases. This process builds the likelihood of a crisis that will produce a strong sense of urgency in the person to stop using harmful substances such as alcohol or drugs. Effective treatment is the answer. Would you like to learn more about the process of ending blame and putting the focus on responsibility? An employee assistance professional or chemical dependency intervention specialist can help.



Workplace Coaching Tips for the Coached

Workplace coaching is the art of improving the performance of others. It's a hot topic in management. Supervisors who do it well are in high demand. Less discussed is how to be a good recipient of coaching. If you are the *coachee*, these skills will get you where you're going faster: 1) Continually assess your skills and abilities to determine how they should match your future goals. 2) Know how to ask effective questions. The answers will help you climb up the career ladder instead of waiting for your supervisor coach to push you up the rungs. 3) See your career as a "business" with your supervisor coach as a partner. This will keep you focused on the "whole you" as a developing employee rather than an employee who is missing some skills and experiences.



Protocols for Political Talk & Workplace



According to a 2007 survey by Vault (a career information and research firm), 46% of respondents said they have witnessed a political argument at the office. During 2008, when political activity is high, be aware of your Agency's policies regarding political activity at work. If you're talking high-spirited politics with a co-worker, these guidelines will help keep your discussion harmonious and not disrupt work production. 1) Remember that a particular political viewpoint is a set of ideas and has no bearing on an individual's integrity or intelligence. 2) Never allow political disagreements to become personal. 3) Always take care to avoid inflammatory language, personal insults, and sweeping generalizations. 4) Allow your sensibilities to be guided by basic courtesy. A good rule of thumb is to follow the same conversational etiquette you would follow if you were a dinner guest in your coworker's home.